

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /055 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9431

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1415

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINS, KS

SUBJECT: LEADING DISSIDENT SPEAKS ABOUT OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT
CARTER AND DISSIDENT STRATEGY TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS.

1. REV. MUN IK-HWAN, FORMER MYONG DONG PRISONER, CALLED ON
EMBOFF TO DELIVER OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON STATE
DEPARTMENT REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA (SEPTTEL). REV.
MUN SAID THAT HE HAD WRITTEN OPEN LETTER AND THOUGHT HE
MIGHT BE DETAINED AT ANY TIME SINCE PROFESSOR YI MUN-YONG,
ANOTHER FORMER MYONGDONG DEFENDANT, HAD ALREADY BEEN
DETAINED FOR READING THE OPEN LETTER AT A CHURCH SERVICE
ON FRIDAY. MUN SAID YI HAD NOT YET BEEN CHARGED AS FAR
AS HE KNEW.

2. REV. MUN SAID THAT A KEY FACTOR WHICH LED HIM TO WRITE
THE OPEN LETTER IN SUCH A STRONG TONE WAS THE ROKG'S APPARENT
REVERSAL OF IIT DECISION TO RELEASE KIM TAE-CHUNG ON THE
LUNAR NEW YEAR. HE FELT THAT PERHAPS THE STATE DEPT
REPORT COULD HAVE BEEN MISINTERPRETED BY THE ROKG AS
SIGN THAT NO FURTHER CONCESSIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WERE
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NECESSARY. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT EMBASSY HAD NO INDI-
CATION THAT ROKG HAD MADE DECISION TO RELEASE KIM
TAE-CHUNG ON LUNAR NEW YEAR. REV. MUN WAS RELIEVED
TO HEAR THIS SINCE HE SAID DISSIDENTS WERE VERY IMPRESSED
WITH ROKG'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO RELEASE KIM TAE-CHUNG
AND OTHER EM PRISONERS DURING NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD END
OF LAST YEAR AND HOPED THAT ROKG HAD NOT CHANGED ITS

MIND.

3. REV. MUN SAID HE, OTHER FORMER MYONGDONG PRISONERS, AND DISSIDENTS WERE DETERMINED TO KEEP UP STRONGEST POSSIBLE PRESSURE ON ROKG. ALL FORMER MYONGDONG PRISONERS HAD BEEN BUSY EMPHASIZING HUMAN RIGHTS THEMES AT LECTURES AND PRAYER MEETINGS; HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT COALITION HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED MUCH TO ROKG'S CHARGIN; AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS WERE TRYING TO ESTABLISH LINKS WITH STUDENTS AND WORKERS. HE SAID A LARGE MEETING WAS BEING PLANNED FOR MARCH 1 AT THE KNCC WHICH HE HOPED WOULD SERVE TO ATTRACT ROKG ATTENTION AND HELP "CONSCIENTICIZE" THE PUBLIC. HE NOTED THAT OVER THE WEEKEND THE POLICE HAD SHOWED SOME SIGN OF REACTING TO THE DISSIDENT'S EFFORTS: YI MUN-YONG HAD BEEN DETAINED; TWO PRIESTS IN PUSAN WHO CELEBRATED A MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE RELEASED MYONGDONG PRISONERS HAD BEEN DETAINED; AND THE OFFICE OF WOMAN MINISTER CHO HWA-SUN OF THE URBAN INDUSTRIAL MISSION IN INCHON HAD BEEN RAIDED.

4. REF. MUN SIAD THAT HE HAS RECENTLY BEEN VISTED BY A KCIA AGENT WHO ASKED HIM WHAT KINDS OF CHANGES HE AND OTHER DISSIDENTS WOULD TAKE AS FIRST STEPS IN THE AMENDMENT OF THE YUSHIN CONSTITUTION. THE AGENTS ASKED IF HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA IF ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT OVER EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS
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(KAM SA KWAN) WERE RESTORED TO THE ASSEMBLY AND IF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES WERE MADE IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC. REV. MUN SAID HE REPLIED THAT THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE CHANGES WOULD BE ELIMINATION OF THE YUCHONGHOE ASSEMBLYMEN AND DIRECT ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT. REV. MUN TOLD EMOFF THAT HE STILL FELT IT WAS BEST FOR THE DISSIDENTS TO KEEP DEMANDING THE MAXIMUM IN HOPE THAT THE ROKG WOULD GRANT A LITTLE.

5. COMMENT: THE KCIA AGENT MAY HAVE BEEN TOYING WITH REV.MUN, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE HAVE HEARD THIS CHANNEL USED TO SPECULATE ABOUT CHANGES IN THE YUSHIN CONSTITUTION OR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES. THE CHANGES MENTIONED BY THE KCIA AGENT WOULD GREATLY ENHANCE THE STATUS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, BUT WOULD STILL, OF COURSE, BE JUST A STEP ON THE ROAD TO THE DEGREE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT DESIRED BY DISSIDENTS.

6. COMMENT: THE ROKG HAS QUESTIONED RELEASED MYONGDONG PRISONERS BEFORE AND HAS NOT YET CHARGED Y MUN-YONG OR RETURNED HIM TO PRISON. IF THEY DO,

IT WOULD BE A SETBACK TO THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN 1977.
SHILE THE DISSIDENTS FEEL MORALLY BOUND TO PRESSURE
THE ROKG, WE CANNOT BE SURE HOW HIGH THE ROKG'S
THRESHOLD OF TOLERANCE IS. THE DISSIDENTS MAY BE
TESTING THE LIMITS WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

7. EMBASSY CHECKING TO DETERMINE STATUS OF YI MUN\$YONG.
STERN

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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